

# Centre for Applied Social Sciences



**Proceedings of the  
Regional Conference on Gender Issues in  
Community-Based Natural Resource Management  
C B N R M  
(Cresta Lodge, Harare : 24 – 27 August 1998)**

Compiled by

**Nontokozo Nabane**  
September 1998

# University of Zimbabwe

# **CENTRE FOR APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCES \***

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**Zimbabwe**

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**The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily  
reflect the views of CASS or IUCN**

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**\*A Member of IUCN - The World Conservation Union**

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# **A Report on Gender in the Forestry Sector in Malawi**

**McJones W.M. Shaba**

## **ABSTRACT**

*Malawi is a SADC member state in Southern Africa with a population of 11 million of which 52% are women. Forestry plays an important role in the development of the country from aesthetic, economic, social, educational, ecological, scientific, cultural, medicinal, environmental and nutritional points of view, among others. Women play a crucial role in various activities in the forestry sector such as tree planting, fuelwood collection and conservation of the forests. However, women are disadvantaged in the sexual division of labour. Gender inequalities have been cause for concern for the Government of Malawi and beginning mid 1990's the Government of Malawi has recognised the importance of incorporating gender considerations into the National Forestry Programme of Action. This paper gives an analysis of the situation in the forestry sector in Malawi by highlighting the constraints, problems and success that have been made towards mainstreaming gender considerations in the sector. It also proposes what needs to be done in order to have an effective national forestry programme that will address the needs of Malawians, particularly women who are disadvantaged in various ways yet they form 52% of the population.*

## **1. Introduction**

This paper highlights the problems and experiences related to gender in the Forestry Sector in Malawi and proposes recommendations which could be put into effect so as to make the forestry program more gender focussed.

The report is divided into five sections. The first section on **Introduction** outlines what is covered in the report. The second section highlights the **Concept of Gender** and the third section on **Rationale for Gender and Development** emphasizes the importance of mainstreaming gender in development. The section on the **Experiences in the Forestry Sector** outlines the successes, observations and problems faced in the Forestry Sector pertaining to mainstreaming gender in the forestry program of action in Malawi. The fifth section highlights gives proposals on mainstreaming gender into the national forestry programme of action. **References** form the last section, and all literature the author used is acknowledged.

## **2. Concept of Gender**

Gender is currently a commonly used term however its meaning and implications are not always understood in the same way. In many cases, quite often gender is confused with sex. It is therefore important to make a distinction between sex and gender.

Sex refers to the biological differences between men and women. Unless one undergoes a sex change operation, the sexual identity is seen as unchanging. Associated with sex, are sex roles which are reproductive roles played by a man and a woman. For example, males produce sperms, produce XY chromosomes determine the sex of a child and make female pregnant. Women on the other hand conceive, breast feed and lactate and undergo a gestation period of nine (9) months.

Gender roles are taught or learnt and are a result of socialization hence changeable. It has nothing to do with biological or anatomical differences between men and women. It is a social construct that denotes culturally and socially determined differences between men and women.

Associated with gender is the gender division of labour which is the allocation of tasks. For example, household maintenance tasks such as cooking, cleaning the house, collecting water for the household and washing clothes are often referred to as “female” tasks and associated with girls and women. Tasks such as hunting, building houses and clearing vegetation for farming are associated with adult males and boys and are often termed as “male” tasks. The various tasks are referred to as gender roles. Society influences the roles of men and women through culture in informal and formal education.

Gender division of labour leads to existing gender inequalities and the most disadvantaged are girls and women. In Malawi, this has led to under utilisation of 52% of the population of the country. It is important to analyze gender in the context of gender roles, gender structures and relations and gender practises. In any society, the needs of women and men are not necessarily the same. In most cases, they are different hence the need for projects/programmes to address gender needs.

### **3. Rationale for Gender and Development (GAD)**

GAD approach sees the causes of women’s subordination as emanating from unequal gender relations, rules in society and the unequal distribution of power and resources. Gender equality is an issue of basic human rights as affirmed in a number of international and regional human rights instruments. Human rights are not only universal and inalienable, they are also indivisible. Gender equality is also a requirement of good democratic practise. GAD is a gender approach to development. It looks at relationships between men and women and recognises the differences in needs, interests, priorities, roles and responsibilities of men and women which are taken into account in planning and implementing appropriate development policies and programs as well as in their monitoring and evaluation.

Incorporating gender considerations into development planning is a more cost effective use of human and financial resources as it leads to increased productivity and sustainable development. It entails gender analysis in order to map out the unequal power relations between men and women. This entails a systematic effort to document and understand the roles of men and women and their relationships within a given socio-culture context.

GAD has not been rationally used as a planning tool in the forestry sector in Malawi. Planning, from a gender perspective, has been understood by many foresters to include setting targets, e.g. pertaining to the number of women to be employed or trained.

## **4. Gender Experiences in the Forestry Sector**

### **4.1 Women at National Level**

Malawi is a long narrow country situated in the southern part of the East African Valley and lies between 9 and 17 degrees south of the equator. Its area is about 118,000km<sup>2</sup> of which one fifth is taken by Lake Malawi. It is one of the poorest countries in the World with its position as 157<sup>th</sup> out of 174 countries in the Human Development Index (1996 UNDP Human Development Report). The GNP per capita in 1996 was US\$ 230. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy accounting for over a third of GDP, about 90% of the export earnings and approximately 75% of the total employment (GOM/UN Report on Situation Analysis of Poverty in Malawi, 1993).

Women constitute 52% of the population of 11 million. When the inequality of the achievements of women and men are taken into account, Malawi is placed 121<sup>st</sup> out of 136 countries on the Gender Related Development Index (GDI) which measures the same capacities as the HDI but is discounted for gender inequality (1996 Human Development Report). 60% of Malawi's population lives in abject poverty and 30% of the poorest are women who live in rural and peri-urban areas. Despite government efforts in development, women still suffer a lot of disadvantages. Women are disadvantaged politically, socially and economically at the national level. The poverty alleviation framework recognises that gender inequality is a major cause of poverty. Some traditional beliefs and customs reinforce gender inequalities in decision-making patterns, inheritance rights, education and health. According to the situation analysis of poverty in Malawi, in 1993 there was one female judge out of 11 judges, only 18 female lawyers out of 150 lawyers and 10 women Members of Parliament (MPs) out of 177.

Malawi has 10.2% of females living in urban areas employed against 45.3% of the males employed. Over 80% of the civil service is male. (Civil Service Census, 1995). Women compose 29% of the professional and technical work force and 8% of the administrative work force and share 33.3% of the earned income. They mostly work in areas such as nursing and teaching which are considered women's domain and they are under represented in the educational system which results in low participation and benefits less from the socio-economic, political and cultural development of the country. 64% of Malawi's population are illiterate, of which 58% are women. High illiteracy rates lead to high fertility rates, which currently is at 6.7. In the agricultural sector, 65% of the rural women are involved in agriculture against 46% of the men. For the informal sector, Sichinga (1996) reports that women are major contributors to the current informal trade, which is more pronounced than before. He attributes this to the wage sector, which has discriminated against them.

## 4.2 Women in the Forestry Sector

The forestry sector in Malawi plays a crucial role to the socio economic development of the country. Forests are important from various angles that include social-culture, economic, nutritional, aesthetic, educational, scientific, recreational and environmental. About 90% of the energy requirements of Malawi are satisfied by woodfuel. It is women who are primarily responsible for collection of fuelwood for use in their homes.

Rural people rely on forests for their needs such as medicines, bush meat, foods, construction materials and agricultural tools amongst other. Forests help maintain air, water and soil quality; influence biochemical processes, regulate runoff and groundwater; control soil erosion, and reduce downstream sedimentation and the incidence of flash flooding. Forests and trees may therefore be viewed in terms of providing watershed protection and enhancing water resources (Forestry Policy, 1996).

The role of women in the forestry sector cannot be over-emphasized. The major areas in which women are involved include:

**Source of Labour force:** Women are involved at three distinct levels : general or classified workers in community or rural based forestry projects as professional and technical staff in forestry departments, and at the household level. As general workers, women work in tree nurseries and plantations. As classified workers, they work as drivers, typists/secretaries, messengers, captaos, receptionists, cleaners, enumerators, storekeepers, data and accounts clerks at sub technical level. At the Department of Forestry Headquarters, there are 102 employees of which 30% (31) are women. As technical and professional staff, women work as forestry extension officers in Forestry Extension Services. They also work in forestry research at the College of Forestry. Presently, 7% of the Professional staff at the Forestry Research Institute of Malawi are females and 14% of the teaching staff at the Malawi College of Forestry are females. The Blantyre City fuelwood Project (BCFP) has a female financial controller. Lilongwe Forestry Project has a woman Project Manager.

**Fuelwood Provision and Use:** Fuelwood is the most important single source of energy for over 90% of the population. The provision and use of wood is primarily the responsibility of women who are the major energy suppliers. For example, women of Gwaza Village and other surrounding villages in Lobi area in Dedza West walk to Dedza Mountain Forests and to Mozambique to collect fuelwood. The distances covered are 16km and 20km respectively to collect a headload which is only enough for 3 days when cooking on open space and 7 days when using fuelwood efficient stoves for a family of 5 persons (ELFP, 1997).

Fuelwood collection and cooking are very time consuming for women. The main activities in fuelwood provision and use include:

- Travel time to the fuelwood gathering area
- Time spent in fuelwood collection and transporting
- Fuelwood preparation (wood cutting, breaking and burning of crop residues)
- Food preparation and cooking (which may take 5-8 hours a day)
- Fire tending

**Income generating activities:** Fuelwood is increasingly becoming an important source of cash for women particularly in urban areas because they have few other options for employment. The collection and sale of fuelwood is a major source of income in areas close to urban markets.

Women are also involved in selling non wood forest products (minor forest products) which include edible insects, mushrooms, fruits and nuts, medicines, caterpillars and grass. For example, during the wet season, selling of edible mushrooms by women along major roads in Malawi is big business, especially in Machinga and Mzimba districts while in Kasunga they sell caterpillars.

Women are producers in small scale industries which include food processing, beer brewing, ceramics and brick burning. Fuelwood is often a major input/raw material in these industries.

**Repositories of Knowledge:** Women are often the chief repositories of knowledge concerning the management, conservation and utilisation of trees and other forest plants because of their traditional reliance on forest resources. They are energy experts and planners due to their considerable experience and practise in planning, energy use and conservation. Such knowledge and experience can be used in planning for energy pricing, distribution and technology acquisition, species selection, crop/tree, grass combinations and use of forest products.

**Tree Planting, Woodlot Management, Protection and Utilisation at household level:** Women are involved in tree planting around their homesteads, woodlot management, protection and utilisation. In Malawi, the Chitukuko Cha Amai M'Malawi (CCAM) a women's organisation has been active in promoting afforestation and tree/forest conservation through mobilising women. Besides establishing its own woodlot, it has promoted competitions on tree planting.

**Education and Training:** Through public education activities, women play an important role. Women plan and execute forestry extension programs together in various parts of the country, female extension workers conduct training sessions in tree planting, management, conservation and utilisation. The promotion of wood saving technologies such as fuelwood and charcoal, and Malawi Ceramic stoves (mbaula) has been effectively done by women extension officers. These extension officers have succeeded in getting messages across to their target audiences, that is women as users.

In educational and training institutions, there are women who teach biological sciences that include forestry and other related subjects. The importance of forests and forestry in the environment is being emphasized. This is important to the pupils who are the future leaders.

## **4.2 Gender Concerns**

In the forestry sector, the following are some gender concerns which mostly disadvantage women. They generally arise from traditional beliefs and customs which reinforce gender inequalities in decision making patterns, inheritance rights, education and health:



**High illiteracy for women:** In training programs, many women have not benefited from training because most of them are illiterate. 64% of the population of Malawi are illiterate of which 58% are women. High illiteracy rates lead to high fertility rates currently at 6.7, high maternal mortality rates, high infant mortality and child morbidity rates and rapid population growth rates. As a result of the high illiteracy rate, leaflets, pamphlets, newsletters, and other materials have not been of importance to the expected level. Training has targeted the literate hence excluding the majority of women who are illiterate.

**Men's negative attitudes towards women in the formal sector:** Recruitment procedures are generally in favour of men. Shaba (1994) reports that women constituted 6% of the professional staff in the forestry sector. This has now gone down to 4%. Over the three years, more men have been recruited. In the Regional Forestry Office (North), situated in the Northern Region women constitute only 5% of the labour force and they are in non decision making positions. In the Viphya Plantations Division, which is the largest single man made plantation in Malawi and one of the three biggest South of the Sahara, women constitute only 7% of the labour force.

**Very few women trained in forestry:** There are various factors that contribute to this. They include women's lack of interest in forestry, inadequate facilities for women, isolated nature of forestry work and bias against women. The curriculum in training institutions is not gender sensitive. At the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife the curriculum is gender biased because illustrations on motorcycle riding, woodlot management and others depict pictures of men.

**Gender Inequality in control over and access to land:** In the matrilineal communities common in Central and Southern Regions, access and control of land is in the hands of women. Men are disadvantaged as women make the decisions on land use and tree ownership by men is temporary.

In patrilineal society men have control and access to land while women have only use rights but no control over the land. Tree ownership is by men. This system is common in Northern Regions and some districts in Central Region such as Lilongwe and Kasungu. It should be noted however, that in the matrilineal system, in theory women have access to and control land, but therefore in both the matrilineal and patrilineal systems women are disadvantaged as they only have use rights but do not control land. Tree ownership is affected in that while women in most cases would like to plant fuelwood species, men have other priorities pertaining to use of land such as growing tobacco. In many parts of Malawi, even in fuelwood scarce areas, while women's priorities are to grow trees for fuelwood, the priorities of men are different.

**Degradation of the Environment:** The environmental problems facing Malawi are deforestation, siltation, soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, decreasing soil productivity, change of climate, pollution of water, air pollution and rapid population growth.

These problems impact most on women for example, deforestation has led to fuelwood shortages. In Malawi, fuelwood constitutes over 90% of the energy used. Due to countrywide deforestation, women travel long distances (over 10km)

everyday to collect fuelwood. The time used in collecting fuelwood would have been better used for other productive work. On average, women spend 10 hours a day in critical fuelwood shortage areas looking for fuelwood.

**Poverty:** Poverty remains endemic in the country. Over 60% of the population live in abject poverty. Fifty-two (52%) of the people who live in rural areas are women. The most vulnerable segments of the population are the smallholder farmers with less than 1 ha. of land, tenants, estate workers, urban poor and female headed households. 30% of the poorest of the poor are women who live in the rural and peri urban areas. These cannot manage to satisfy their basic needs; for example, in urban areas they resort to using maize cobs, maize husks, Chibuku packets and also some go without food.

**Tree Planting:** Tree planting is considered a male domain. Even Government Departments such as Agriculture and Forestry have targeted male farmers in their extension programs with the belief that benefits would be enjoyed by the result of this, over 80% of the woodlots throughout the country are owned by men.

**Position:** Women are looked as subordinates in both matrilineal and patrilineal society. This leads to decision making at household level mostly being done by men. Women are supposed to make their own decisions and therefore are not in a position to decide their own destiny. For example:

- Women cannot get credit without consent of their husbands for those who are married and from their relatives for those not married. This gender discrimination persists in policies of lending institutions in the country.
- Women cannot decide on the use of trees even if they were planted by them. Trees are in most cases cut down by husbands without consulting their spouses.
- Women cannot go for informal training in forestry offered by the Department of Forestry and others without consulting their spouses who often do not allow them.
- Controls over benefits from afforestation are decided by men.

**Lack of Knowledge and Information:** Women lack information in natural resources management and environmentally friendly technologies. Generally, arising from the gender concerns above, the level of participation of women in the forestry sector is much lower than that of men. They are not generally involved in policy and decision making on issues to do with forestry development.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Unit in the Department of Forestry established during its survey of the Wood Energy Project that women plant trees mainly for fuelwood and men plant trees for a variety of purposes (poles, timber and sale) of which construction timber is important. To most men, fuelwood is not a problem

## **5. Initiatives in Engendering the Forestry Sector**

The Government of Malawi through the SADC Forestry Sector Technical Co-ordination Unit (SADC FSTCU) in the Department of Forestry of the Ministry of

Forestry, Fisheries and Environmental Affairs is charged with the tasks of spearheading forestry development in the SADC Region. SADC FSTCU has undertaken a number of activities in ensuring that the SADC Forestry Programme of Action at regional and national levels are gender sensitive. For the Malawi Forestry Sector a historical perspective is given below and observations are also made on the various initiatives undertaken.

- 1987:** The SADC Council of Ministers recommended that the interests of women should be taken into account in the SADC Programme of Action.
- 1991:** FSTCU organized a workshop on Women in Development (WID) in Tanzania. Two (2) officers represented the Department of Forestry.
- 1992:** FSTCU commissioned a consultancy to ensure the incorporation of WID issues in the SADC Forestry Program of Action. Malawi was covered by the consultancy besides, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania. The consultants produced a draft policy statement on WID for the SADC Forestry Sector, which was approved and adopted by the SADC member states. Malawi through the Department of Forestry adopted the policy.
- 1994:** A SADC Regional Gender Sensitization and Planning Workshop for the forestry sector was held in Malawi. Twenty (20) officers from the Department of Forestry benefited from the training. The workshop was funded by UNIFEM and SADC FSTCU. Guidelines on incorporating gender in Project and Programs were developed.
- 1995:** Seven (7) foresters from the Department of Forestry benefited from training on Gender Sensitization and Planning. UNIFEM funded the workshop.
- 1997:** Draft National Action Plan for Malawi in working towards engendering the National Forestry Programme of Action was formulated at the SADC Regional Forestry Workshop held in Windhoek, Namibia by Malawi delegation. Plans focus basically on sensitizing forestry staff and other related organizations with interest in forestry on the importance of gender.

**Promotion of Women in Projects and Training:** Set targets were made on numbers of women to be employed in projects (such as the Blantyre City Fuelwood Project where 35% labour force in 1986 was set aside for women) and also at the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife. The quotas set were donor driven as a result they were not achieved at all. The highest target achieved at BCFP was 26% and these were mostly general workers.

**Appointment of Desk Officers for Women in Development:** Officers were appointed at different times to represent the Department of Forestry (DF) at the National Commission for Women in Development (NCWID). In the initial days, there was a lot of support given to such officers, but eventually it dwindled.

## 5.1 Forestry Policy

The new National Forestry Policy of Malawi was approved by Cabinet in 1996. The policy is comprehensive unlike the previous Forestry Policy which was in use for the period 1964-1996 (January). Gender Issues in the Forestry Policy have been highlighted as cross-cultural issues and focus on the following strategies (1996):

- To support women not only in forest based subsistence and informal economies but as a key agency for innovative development of the rural forestry sector including the growing, harvesting, processing and marketing of fuelwood, domestic construction wood and industrial wood.
- Promote the formalisation of linkages between established women's groups and forest extension.
- Give special attention to the support of women in the promotion of forest management, training of professional and technical forestry personnel, forest conservation through participation and funding of farm forestry.
- Ensure that women in the Forestry Department are offered access to equal opportunities for promotion, training and career development.

The above strategies are to ensure that women's role in forest and tree resource utilization and management receive due attention.

The following observations are made on the Forestry Policy:

- The gender issues are not explicitly highlighted. Consequently, there are no gender-oriented objectives to address the gender issues. The formal strategies indicated above are rather seen in isolation under cross-cultural issues in the Section on Gender Issues. The strategies are rather general and are not supported at all by contextualising of the need for action.
- There is a general lack of attention to gender issues throughout the policy document.
- The policy document does not articulate the disparities between men and women in the forestry sector pertaining to access, control and benefits of resources whether tangible or intangible.
- The language throughout the Policy document is gender neutral. The document in all sections refers to general categories of people such as: citizens, people, communities, beneficiaries, human population, individuals, staff, personnel, government officials in forestry, rural communities. There is no disaggregation of the terminology and assessment of how men and women and the disadvantaged impact on development and *vice versa* in the country.

## 5.2 Project Planning and Appraisal

Despite training provided on gender sensitization and planning in 1994 to planning officers, planning continues to be done without taking into account gender

considerations. Planning does not take into account the impact of policies and plans on men and women, and is not sympathetic to women's needs.

The Planning process does not yet use participatory development methodologies. Despite advocating for bottom up approach, planning continues to be top down. However a recent project on **CO-MANAGEMENT OF FORESTS RESOURCES** entailed a combination of Participatory Rural Appraisal method and household surveys. The focus groups were men, women, boys and girls.

### **5.3 Project Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Department of Forestry has a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, which works hand in hand with the Planning Unit. The Monitoring and Evaluation Unit has not genderised the Monitoring and evaluation system for various activities in the Department of Forestry.

While the Head of Monitoring and Evaluation Unit has been trained in gender sensitization and planning all his eight assistants have not been trained at all and besides all the M&E assistants are male. There is need to have more female monitoring and evaluation assistants.

Forms used for monitoring progress in plantations as well as activities have been in use for the last 30 years or so and are not gender sensitive at all. The forms used were formulated during the colonial era. The focus on information in the forms is on physical achievements and targets amongst other areas. Besides, the forms were designed at a time when forestry was considered as a man's domain.

Disaggregation of data by gender during monitoring and evaluation has been done for Lilongwe Forestry Project and Blantyre City Fuelwood Project but there is need to undertake it more comprehensively as well as to explicitly indicate the impact of activities on men and women. The impact of men and women on the various activities should also be shown. The Lilongwe Forestry Project is funded by the African Development Bank (ADB), and the Blantyre City Fuelwood Project (BCFP) is funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD).

*Targets for the number of women to be employed by the BCFP were set by the donor and for Lilongwe Forestry Project, the ADB has emphasized reporting that reflects gender-disaggregated data. It is important that the Department of Forestry should not only see the importance of gender sensitive reporting in donor-funded projects, but all forestry activities. The need for engendering reports on progress of field activities cannot be overemphasized. Women have not been involved to the same extent when undertaking evaluation of projects. In most cases it is men who have been involved in data collection and designing of data requirements. The reporting system in many cases has not comprehensively and explicitly reflected gender issues. Monitoring of use and reinvestment of funds has also not been done from a gender perspective.*

### **5.4 Project Implementation**

Of the 20 forestry staff trained in gender sensitization and planning in 1994, over 60% are at the Department of Forestry Headquarters. They are basically planners. These however have not influenced various stages of the project cycle to be gender sensitive.

In the field, the bulk of staff at various levels are not yet trained hence are not gender sensitive. Apparently, there is still no preferential access to resources by the disadvantaged gender. The budget does not meet the needs of women, for example, training in the Department of Forestry has largely benefited male farmers. About 80% of the farmers trained in Malawi today are males. In the field, over 90% of forestry staff are males.

### **5.5 Training at the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife**

The Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife offers training at certificate and diploma courses. (Forestry Assistant and Forester). It was opened in 1952, however it was not until 1984 that it opened its doors to women students for a certificate course. The first women students were admitted for a diploma course in 1993.

Since 1986, a total of 45 women students have been trained at the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife of which 5 have come with Diplomas in Forestry and 40 with Certificates. The proportion of women trained at Malawi College of Forestry relative to men is 4.7%

Currently all women who have come out of the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife are working in the Forestry Extension and in Forestry Support Services as research assistants and forestry extension officers. Women have not yet been posted to Forestry Development Division and the Viphya Plantations Division, which deal with planning, management and development of timber plantations and indigenous forest reserves. Activities associated with timber plantations are viewed as appropriate for men, which is not necessarily true.

Currently, there have been efforts to enhance enrolment of women in the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife. Hostels for women students have been built and the management of the college plans in 1997 to make use of role models who will go around educational institutions so as to attract more females to the college.

## **6. Mainstreaming Gender In Forestry**

While there have been efforts to mainstream gender in forestry, the approach has not been systematic and comprehensive as it should be. In many cases, such efforts have been localised in some divisions of the Department of Forestry.

Actions have also been done as a result of donor influence for donor funded projects such as the Blantyre City Fuelwood Project and Lilongwe Forestry Project. Gender has meant disaggregating data by gender when reporting without further assessing the impact of activities, projects and programs on men and women as well as vice versa. Planning for projects was done without taking into account all gender considerations pointing out deficiencies in the planning process.

While guidelines for incorporating gender issues at all stages of the project cycle were developed in 1994, not much has been done to adopt the guidelines despite having the expertise. The following proposals are made in order to mainstream gender into the national forestry programme of action:

- There should be deliberate efforts to increase the number of women staff in decision-making positions in the Department of Forestry. The bulk of women currently are working as general workers or classified workers as highlighted above. 87% of the women working at Forestry Department Headquarters, for example, are not in decision making positions. At the Regional Forestry Office (North) all women (100%) are working in subordinate positions.
- Curriculum in informal and non-formal education and training should be gender sensitive. Training opportunities should also be made available to women.
- Use of role models should be promoted by the formal sector to attract women in the forestry sector.
- The Forestry Policy does not reflect gender issues explicitly. The Forestry Policy needs to be comprehensively and clearly gender sensitive, as it is the base of the forestry programme of action.
- There should be commitment on the part of management to ensure that the forestry sector is engendered at all levels. Management at all levels should match enthusiastic verbal support with action.
- Monitoring and Evaluation Unit should work closely with the Planning Unit and should make all documents (report formats, project proposals) gender sensitive. All field staff should be given appropriate guidance on various aspects related to the planning and reporting of progress in the field. Hence, gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation systems should be developed.
- A Draft National Action Plan on engendering the forestry Sector for Malawi should be refined and adopted. The plan was produced at the SADC Regional Workshop on Gender Sensitization and Planning for Directors of Forestry in Windhoek, Namibia in February, 1997, and since then nothing has been done to develop it.

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